National Pamphlet Series : No. 4.

THE SWADESHI VOW

WHY INDIANS SHOULD NOW TAKE IT

This pamphlet was compiled by a Committee of Home Rulers, who are now minutely studying problems of current interest to the Indian Nation. Suggestions and criticisms will be gratefully received by the Committee and they may be addressed to M. Subraya Kamath, 10, Esplanade, Madras.

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THE SWADESHI VOW

WHY INDIANS SHOULD TAKE IT NOW

Among the many resolutions passed at the monster public meeting held at the Gokhale Hall, Madras, on Thursday the 21st June 1917, the following resolution received the most enthusiastic support :

"That this meeting calls upon the people to take such lawful measures as will bring home to the British public the error and the greivous injustice of the coerceive policy embarked upon by the Madras Government."

In moving its adoption by the meeting, Dr. M. C. Nanjunda Rao, said :

" We must not be satisfied with passing pious resolutions but must follow them up by actual practical steps. I appeal to the young and old Indians to take the Swadeshi Vow and help the revival of indegenous industries. We have no arms or machine guns to defend ourselves with. The only weapons we possess are passive resistence and Swadeshi."

This sentiment was enthusiastically cheered and the consensus of opinion at the meeting was that the resolution should have been more explicit and,emphatic. The Swadeshi Vow constitutes the only means by which we can show the intensity of our feeling against this repressive policy. There is no alternative which can, under the present circumstance, being beneficial to the country be effective with our rulers if it is successfully adhered to. Resolutions in the Legislative Councils, protest meetings all over the country, deputations to England—all these may be useful to some extent ; but just now, the times are such and the course of Government policy so reactionary that these efforts have to be reinforced by a constitutional agitation like the Swadeshi movement which will touch and reach a much wider class of people.

The Swadeshi Vow, if taken and adhered to on a very large scale, is bound to be beneficial. But before we take it—and we must take it—let us remind ourselves that that forms a powerful lever by which we can draw the attention of the British Democracy to our grievances. We should therefore be prepared to exert to the best of our power. Secondly, we must guard against those forces which diminished its success in the Minto regime. We must study and avoid them. Some of our critics have already told us that the Swadeshi movement this time will be as sure a failure as it was, or rather as they say it was, a decade ago. Evidently those friends feel sure that we are incapable of learing from our failures.

It is indeed questionable whether the last Swadeshi movement was a failure. Surely some of the concerns it gave rise to, have disappeared; but have not others proved successful? Moreover, in all industrial efforts, there is bound to be a certain proportion of failures. It may be that carried by the enthusiasm of the moment, people did not pay as much attention to the business aspect of their concerns as they would has done in less troublesome times; but even after all allowanoe is made for those drawbacks, few will deny that the Swadeshi movement has given us several sound enterprises.

There are moreover several reasons why the movement has chances of a better success now. Several more articles of common use are obtainable now than they were ten years ago. Some of them are also of as good a quality as any now imported, such as buttons, shoes, and nibs of certain varieties. One has only to visit the Swadeshi Co-operative Stores, Bombay, to realise to what extent foreign goods can, without any difficulty, be avoided in these days and home made goods encouraged. It should be possible to open similar stores in all cities and towns, and the Bombay concern has been paying a very good divided in recent years.

Finally let us not forget that the War has considerably diminished foreign competition in some of our industries. The increase in freights is acting as a protective tariff against all foreign producers and it will continue to do so for some years even after the War closes. The rousing of

enthusiasm in the country at this moment may therefore influence business people to start new industries, which at least for some years to come, may be sure of this artificial protection against the foreigner, and by means of that help to establish themselves firmly and in a position to compete with the foreigner on equal terms.

The success of the Swadeshi Vow depends—it is perhaps worth recalling just at this moment—mainly upon educated Indians and mostly young men. It is they who are the worst offenders. The poor or the villager rarely uses Videshi goods but not so the educated young Indian—the more so if he is given to aping western manners. This fact is, in one respect, encouraging. It is the educated young Indian who is most enthusiastic about Home Rule; and if he decides to banish foreign goods, half of our task is accomplished. Let us remind him how far he can be a Swadeshist. First, he must give up the Videshi cigarette. Perhaps he does not know that by that vice, he is one of those who sends out of India about a crore of rupees per year. Swadeshi cigarettes are obtainable; but still, he should endeavour to give up that vice altogether. And if he be too effiminate to do that, let him smoke the Swadeshi cigars, cigarettes or bidies.

Next as to his boots and shoes. Excellent Indian made sandals are obtainable in almost every town and city, and sandals are said to be better fitted for use in India than the tight boots or shoes. If the young Indian should have become too denationalised to use sandals— we hope no Home Ruler is in that list—then too he can be a Swadeshist. Boots and shoes of Indian make are found in all large cities and Swadeshi stores should have no difficulty in getting them. They are of quite a good quality and we understand that many Europeans are wearing them now. The prices too are lower, mainly because of the large demand for English boots from the War Department. One point we wish however to emphasis here, Most of the firms in India manufacturing boots are European firms, so the profits will go partly out of the country. Not so in the case of sandals which are almost wholly of Indian make.

Let we now come to the neckties which are finding more patrons among our young men. First of all, may we

remaind them that the tie is an emblem of Christianity, indicating the cross? To dispense with ties is therefore the best plan for a Hindu or a Muslim, but if that be not agreeable, let us at least use those of Indian make. Perhaps those locally made are not of so good a variety—from the standpoint of individual fancy—as the Videshi ones; but the sacrifice which a young man is called upon to make on that account is surely not great.

As to other articles of dress, Swadeshi goods stand western competition in almost all directions. No foreign mull can compete in fineness with the Decca muslin which is now being produced in fairly large quantities and the Bombay mills too are producing good varieties of mulls. In the matter of dhoties, the foreign manufacture is nowhere when compared to the Indian. The Ahmedabad dhoties richly deserve the popularity they have won even from our denationalised young men. Equally plentiful and good is the supply of cloths for shirts and coats.

Thus for every day use the Indian youth can, if he be patriotic enough, be a good Swadeshist. As to other articles of common use; most of it can be had from any good Swadeshi store. Soaps, nibs, paper, pen-holders and even pencils are obtainable, though some of the articles are not of the satisfactory type. The mistake for that lies generally with the traders, because he does not always tak care to buy the best obtained in the country. Still, we adm some sacrifice is expected from every Indian who takes tl Swadeshi Vow, and if that was not involved, there world have been no necessity to make this appeal at all.

Some Anglo-Indian friends have obligingly come forward with the encouraging advise that the Swadeshi movement is bound to fail. That is a comment of very happy augury. From that criticism, it is safe to infer that in the opinion of those astute writers too, the National cause is sure to gain from the adoption of the Swadeshi Vow, else they would not have come forward with their officious advice.

We need hardly remind our leaders that the resolution to take the Vow wholly in keeping with the view of our

interned leader, Mrs. Annie Besant. She wrote in the Commonweal of Nov. 24th 1916:

* * * *

"It is also proposed, if my paper is confiscated and I am interned, to revive the old Swadeshi Vow, for the reasons given below. It was the most patent cause for the annulment of the Partition of Bengal. Those who take it might also wear the old Rajaputana symbol of the scarlet "rakki", or cord-bracelet, which the Rajaputri used to send when in distress to some man friend, who thus became her Rakki-band-Bhai. The ancient chivalrous customs of the land, in the days of its freedom, are potent inspirers.

THE SWADESHI VOW

Whereas the Press Act and the Defence of India Act are being used to criple the liberty of the Indian Press, and to deprive persons of their liberty against whom no evidence exists of disloyalty or of intent to resort to violence; and

Whereas it is necessary to draw the attention of the British public to the serious discontent arising from the wide spread and illegitimate use of these measures, the legality of which is, moreover, doubtful, as being beyond the power of the Supreme Government of India to enact; and

Whereas the Supreme and Local Governments are utterly indifferent to Indian opinion, as proclaimed in hundreds of meetings and articles in Indian papers, it is therefore necessary to take such peaceable but effective action as is open to us;

It is hereby

Resolved that:

Invoking the blessing of Almighty God, and making appeal to His Justice, for the purpose of winning for ourselves and for unborn generations the elementary rights of freedom of person and security of property until deprived of them by judicial sentence after open trial, we make the solemn vow to purchase Home-made goods in preference to foreign ones even at a sacrifice, and may Almighty God give us strength of will to carry out this our solemn vow until these rights be restored to the Indian Nation.

* * * *

Opinion seems to be unanimous all over India that the Swadeshi movement must be given a fresh impetus. For that we have to work preminently along two lines. First there must be Swadeshi stores in almost every village and town. Secondly, there must be a huge propaganda campaign as to why every patriot must now use only Swadeshi articles The reasons for that are supplied in the following extracts from the speeches or writings of two of our great leaders; and for a fuller exposition of the same, the reader is directed to a book on *the Swadeshi Movement*, published by Messrs. Natesan and Co., and obtainable at the Home Rule Book Shop for one rupee.

Mr. G. K. Gokhale said at Lahore in February 1907 :

Swadeshism at his highest is not merely an industrial movement but it affects the whole life of the nation.—Swadeshism at its highest is a deep, passionate, fervent, all-embracing love of the motherland, and this love seeks to show itself, not in one sphere of activity only, but in all: it invades the whole man, and it will not rest until it has raised the whole man. Now the first thing I want to say about this movement is that it has come here to stay. We often have movements which make a little noise for a time and then disappear without leaving any permanent mark behind. I think it safe to say that the Swadeshi movement is not going to be one of that kind, and my own personal conviction is that in this movement we shall ultimately find the true salvation of India.

Gentlemen, as Mr. Ranade once pointed out, the industrial domination of one people by another attracts much less attention than the political domination of a foreign people. The industrial domination is less visible and does its work in a more insidious manner. The disadvantages of a political domination lie very much on the surface. We see a foreign race monopolising all power and authority and keeping the people in a state of subjection. These are facts which we observe and feel every day of our lives. Human feelings often matter more to humanity than human interests, and when your feelings are hurt in various directions, as in a state of subjection they are bound to be—I do not mean to throw any unnecessary blame on any one—their thought fills you night and day and makes you think constantly of the fact that you are living under a foreign domination. On the other hand, the industrial domination of one people by another may come in attractive garb.

If, as has been the case with India, this foreign domination comes in the shape of more finished articles—especially articles that administer to the daily wants of a community—you unconsciously welcome the domination, you fall a victim to its temptations and its attractiveness. And it is only when the evil grows beyond certain limits, that your attention is drawn to it. Now this is precisely what has happened in the case ot India.

Gentlemen, when we come to this question of India's industrial domination by England, we come to what may be described as the most deplorable result of British rule in this country. In other matters there are things on the credit side and things on the debit side. Take, for instance the political and administrative results of British rule. We have here the shutting out of a whole race from positions of real trust and responsibility where powers of initiative can be developed, and this is producing disastrous results on the character of the people. We also see that the forcible disarming of a population is bound to crush the manhood of the nation. In these directions we find that a steady deterioration of the race has set in. But there are compensating advantages, and I am not sure that the balance is not on the latter side. But when you come to the industrial field, you find that the results have been disastrous. You find very little here on the credit side and nearly all the entries on the debit side. Now this is a serious statement to make, but I think it can be substantiated. I would ask you, first, to glance at what India was industrially before the English came into this country. It is true that there is very little direct or statistical evidence on this subject. But the statements made by travellers who came to this country supply a fair indication of how things were, though they do not enable us to establish a conclusion accurately or satisfactorily. We find, for instance, praise of India's riches in every place; we find also here and there a description of the poverty of the mass of the people. And, on the whole, I think it is fair to say this—that, compared with other countries, India could not have been worse, and very probably she was better off than most other countries, and I think this description may well apply to her right up to the end of Mahomedan rule. India's reputed wealth was the attracting cause of so many invasions. Large wealth must, therefore, have been accumulated in some hands, and so far as the bulk of the population was concerned, as the land was fertile and the people were industrious and thrifty and, on the whole, free from vices, such as drink, it is fair to conclude that the people must have enjoyed a considerable degree of rude agricultural prosperity. It is not proper to

compare the West of to-day, with all its production of machinery and steam, with the India of 200 years ago. Before steam and machinery were employed in the West, the West too was largely agricultural, and she had then no special advantages for the production of wealth over us. And I believe that, judged by the standards of those days, we could not have been poorer, and very probably we were richer than most Western countries. Then there was the excellence of our productions which attracted the attention of Western nations—the fine muslins and many other things exported from this country showed what a high level of excellence had been reached by our people in industrial production. When the Mahomedan rulers came, they settled in this country, and there was no question of any foreign drain. Things, therefore, must have, on the whole, continued as they had been before their time.

Then we come to British rule. Gentlemen, I refer, on this occasion, to the past, only in order that, in the light of it, we might understand the present and derive therefrom guidance and assistance for the future. The early days of the East India Company's rule were as bad as they could possibly be from the standpoint of India's industrial system. Deliberate steps were taken by the Company to destroy the industries of the people and to make room for Western manufacturers. This has been acknowledged by English writers themselves. This was England's policy, not towards India alone, but towards America and Ireland also. America got rid of it by shaking off England's dominion altogether. Ireland struggled to do the same, but did not succeed. India suffered the worst under the operation of the evil policy. The object aimed at by the East India Company was to reduce India to the level of a merely agricultural country producing raw material only, without factories to manufacture the same. This was the first stage in our industrial decay. The second stage began when England forced on us the policy of free trade, *i.e*, of leaving the door wide open to the competition of the whole world. England's own policy for centuries had been that of Protection, and by that policy she had built up her vast Industrial system. But about sixty years ago, after Protection had done its work, she decided to give up the old policy and adopt Free Trade, mainly to set right the abuses to which Protection had given rise. England depends on foreign countries for most of her raw materials, and she supplies manufactured articles practically to the whole world. It was, therefore, to the advantage of England that there should be no export or import duties, as one result of such duties was to add to the

cost of the articles supplied to foreign countries. But forcing this policy of free trade upon a country circumstanced as India was, was a wholly different thing and was bound to produce result of a most disastrous character. Our things were made with the hand; we did not possess anything like the combination, skill or enterprise of the West. Steam and machinery were unknown in the country. Our industries were, therefore, bound to perish as a result of the shock of this sudden competition to which they were exposed, and as a matter of course the introduction of Free Trade in this country was followed by the rapid destruction of such small industries as had existed in the country, and the people were steadily pressed back more and more on the one resource of agriculture. I should not have deplored even this destruction of our indigenous manufactures if the Government had assisted us in starting others to take their place. The German economist—List—whose work on Political Economy is the best that Indian students can consult, explains how the State can help an old-world agricultural country, suddenly brought within the circle of the world's competition, to build upon a new system of industries. He says that the destruction of hand-industries in a necessary stage through which an industrially backward country must pass before she can take rank with those which use steam and machinery and advanced scientific processes and appliances in their industrial production. When hand-made goods are exposed to the competition of machine-made goods, it is inevitable that the former should perish. But when this stage is reached, there comes in the duty of the State. The State, by a judicious system of protection, should then ensure conditions under which new infant industries can grow up. And until the new industries can stand on their own legs, it becomes the duty of the State to have a protective wall around. This is what America—already one of the richest nations in the world, and one which will yet reach the foremost place—has done and the case is the same with France and Germany. The result of England's policy in India has, however been to facilitate more and more the imports of foreign commodities, until there is no country on the face of the earth to-day which is so dependent on the foreign producer as India is. At the present moment about 70 per cent. of our exports are raw material raised from the soil and exported in that condition. It we had the skill, enterprise, capital and organisation to manufacture the greater part of this material, there would be so many industries flourishing in the country. But the material goes out and comes back in the shape of

manufactured commodities, having acquired a much higher price in the process of manufacture.

Every year about 100 crores worth of goods come to us, and we part with 150 crores worth of goods. After taking into consideration the precious metals that come into the country to redress a part of the balance, we still find that a loss of about 30 to 40 crores a year has to be borne by India, Now, I will put a simple question to those present here. If a hundred rupees come into your house every month and a hundred and fifty rupees go out, will you be growing richer or poorer? And if this process goes on year after year, decade after decade, what will be your position after a time? This has been the case with India now for many years. Every year between 30 and 40 crores of rupees go out of India never to come back. No country—not even the richest in the world—can stand such a bleeding as this, Bleeding is a strong word, but it was first used with regard to this very process by a great English statesman—the late Lord Salisbury—who was Prime Minister of England for a long time and was before that Secretary of State for India. Now this bleeding is really at the root of the greater part of the economic mischief that we have to face to day. It means that this money, which would have been available to the people, if it had remained in this country, as capital for industrial purposes, is lost to us. The result is that there is hardly any capital of our own forthcoming for industrial purposes. Do not be misled by the fact that a few individuals appear to be rich and have a little money to invest. You must compare India in this matter with other countries, and then you will find that there is hardly any capital accumulated by us to be devoted to industrial development. One of the greatest students of Indian Economics—the late Mr. Justic Ranade—once calculated that our annual savings could not be more than 8 to 10 crores of rupees. Put it even at 20 crores; what is that in a vast country like India compared with the hundreds and thousands of crores accumulated annually by the people of the West! This, then, is at the root of our trouble. I do not say that there are no considerations on the other side. It might, for instance, be said that the railways in this country have been constructed with English capital. About 375 crores have been so far spent to build these railways, and it is only fair that for this capital India should pay a certain sum as interest. Englishmen have also invested British capital in indigo, tea and other industries. A part of this capital has no doubt come out of their own savings made in this country, but whether the money has been earned here or imported from England, the investors are, of course, entitled to a reasonable

rate of interest on it. But after a deduction is made on account of this interest, there still remains a sum of over 30 crores as the net loss that India has to bear year by year. You may ask what politics has got to do with this. Well, the greater part of this loss is due to the unnatural political position of India, and I think we shall not be far wrong if we put the annual drain, due to political causes directly and indirectly, at about 20 crores of rupees. The greater part of the 'Home Charges' of the Government of India, which now stand at about 18 millions sterling or 27 crores of rupees, comes under this description. To this has to be added a portion at least of the annual savings of European merchants, lawyers, doctors and such other persons, as the dominant position of the Englishman in the country gives these classes special advantages which their Indian competitors do not enjoy. Then there are earnings of the English officials and the British troops in the country. And altogether I am convinced that it is not an extravagant estimate to put the annual cost to India of England's political domination at 20 crores of rupees, the remaining ten crores being lost on account of our industrial domination by England.

The Swadeshi cause requires to be served in a variety of ways, and we should be careful not to quarrel with others, simply because they serve the cause in a different way from our own. Thus, whoever tries to spread in the country a correct knowledge of the industrial conditions of the world and points out how we may ourselves advance, is a promoter of the Swadeshi cause. Whoever again contributes capital to be applied to the industrial development of the country must be regarded as a benefactor of the country and a valued supporter of the Swadeshi movement. Then those who organize funds for sending Indian students to foreign countries for acquiring industrial or scientific education—and in our present state we must, for some time to come, depend upon foreign countries for such education—or those who proceed to foreign countries for such education and try to start new industries on their return, or those who promote technical, industrial and scientific education in the country itself—all these are noble workers in the Swadeshi field. These three ways of serving the Swadeshi cause are, however, open to a limited number of persons only. But there is a fourth way, which is open to all of us, and in the case of most, it is, perhaps, the only way in which they can help forward the Swadeshi movement. It is to use ourselves, as for as possible, Swadeshi articles only and to preach to others that they should do the same. By this we shall ensure the consumption of whatever articles are produced in the

country and we shall stimulate the production of new articles by creating a demand for them. The mass of the people cannot contribute much capital to the industrial development of the country. Neither can they render much assistance in the matter of promoting higher scientific, technical or industrial knowledge among us, but they can all render a most important and a most necessary service to the Swadeshi cause by undergoing a little sacrifice to extend a kind of voluntary protection to Swadeshi industries in their early days of stress and struggle. In course of time, the quality of Swadeshi articles is bound to improve and their cost of production to become less and less. And it is no merit if you buy them when they can hold their own against foreign articles in quality or price. It is by ensuriug the consumption of indigenous articles in their early stage, when their quality is inferior or their price is higher, or when they labour under both these disadvantages, that we can do for our industries what Protectionist Governments have done for theirs by means of State protection. Those, therefore, who go about and preach to the people that they should use, as far as possible, Swadeshi articles only, are engaged in sacred work and I say to them—go forward boldly and preach your Gospel enthusiastically. Only do not forget that yours is only one way out of several of serving the Swadeshi cause. And do not do your work in a narrow, exclusive, intolerant spirit which says—'whoever is not with us is against us.' But do it in the broader, more comprehensive, more catholic spirit, which says—'whoever is not against us is with us.' Try to keep down and not encourage the tendency, which seems to be almost inherent in the Indian mind of to-day, to let small differences assume undue importance. Harmony, co-operation, union—by these alone can we achieve any real success in our present state.

In this connection I think I ought to say a word about an expression which has, of late, found considerable favour with a section of my countrymen—'the boycott of foreign goods.' I am sure most of those who speak of this 'boycott' mean by it only the use, as far as possible, of Swadeshi articles in preference to foreign articles. Now such use is really included in true Swadeshi; but unfortunately the word 'boycott' has a sinister meaning—it implies a vindictive desire to injure another, no matter what harm you may thereby cause yourself. And I think we would do well to use only the word Swadeshi to describe our present movement, leaving alone the word 'boycott' which creates unnecessary ill-will against ourselves. Moreover, remember that a strict 'boycott' of foreign goods

is not at all practicable in our present industrial condition. For when you 'boycott' foreign goods, you must not touch even a particle of imported articles; and we only make ourselves ridiculous by talking of a resolution which we cannot enforce.

One word more and I have done. In the struggle that lies before us, we must be prepared for repeated disappointments. We must make up our minds that our progress is bound to be slow, and our successes, in the beginning at any rate, comparatively small. But if we go to work with firm faith in our hearts, no difficulties can obstruct our way for long, and the future will be more and more on our side. After all, the industrial problem, formidable as it is, is not more formidable than the political problem. And, to my mind, the two are largely bound together. Ladies and Gentlemen, the task which the people of India are now called upon to accomplish is the most difficult that ever confronted any people on the face of the earth. Why it has pleased Providence to set it before us, why we are asked to wade through the deepest part of the stream—to be in the hottest part of the battle—Providence alone knows. But it is my hope and my faith that we will successfully achieve this task. The situation requires us to devote ourselves to the service of our motherland in an earnest and self-sacrificing spirit. But what can be higher or nobler or holier or more inspiring than such service? In working for India, we shall only be working for the land of our birth, for the land of our fathers, for the land of our children. We shall be working for a country which God has blessed in many ways, but which man has not served so well. And if we do this work as God wants us to do it, our motherland will yet march onwards and again occupy an honoured place among the nations of the world.

SISTER NIVEDITA.

The following are extracts from an article by Sister Nivedita in the *Indian Review*:

It is necessary to say, and I feel that it cannot be said too strongly, that in the Swadeshi movement the Indian people have found an opportunity to make themselves respected by the whole world. For the world respects that which shows that it is to be feared, and the one thing that is feared by all is strong, intelligent, and united action. We conquer a single elephant with ease. But where is the man who would attack a herd? The note of manliness, and self-help is sounded throughout the Swadeshi movement. There is here no begging for help, no cringing for concessions. What

India can do for herself, that she will do. What she cannot at present do for herself will be considered hereafter.

To go deeper, it is the *duty* of the Indian people to refuse to the very utmost of their power to participate in that conspiracy of modern trade by which their own country and their own people are being impoverished in an accumulating ratio. Political exigencies do not create this duty. But political exigencies make it possible to bring it home to consciences what would otherwise have been difficult to touch, and by the force of common effort, to put new hope and enthusiasm into even the oldest workers. And there is no reason why the movement should fail in India. The fact that America could not maintain her own industries without a high protective tariff, the fact that no Swhdeshi movement, resting on a purely moral and voluntary basis, could possibly succeed in any European country, is no argument against the success of such a movement amongst ourselves. To begin with, the man who has a choice of weapons by which to make his strength felt, may be indifferent to a particular kind, but the situation changes when that is all he has. His whole power of resistance, his whole impulse of self-preservation, is then concentrated on its use, And the Swadeshi movement is all we have. In Western countries. moreover, there is a certain minimum line of comfort, below which people cannot go. But with us, there is no such line. The Indian power to abstain is without a limit. But there is even more in our favour. For, while it cannot be denied, that Eastern peoples have hitherto shown themselves to be defensive, they have, throughout the whole course of human history, proved themselves vastly stronger in ability to unite for the affirming of a given idea, in self-surrender to a moral impulse, in the power steadily to endure all the discomfort, deprivation or refusal for the sake of right. Thus, the whole history of India fits the Indian people for a struggle in which there is no force to uphold the *Dharma* against the temptations of self-indulgence, of comfort, and of individual selfishness save that of the human will and the human conscience. It may be that no other modern country could succeed in this ordeal. Yet, even that would not condemn the holy land to fail. The Indian people have heard, so far, of nothing but their weaknesses. The time has now come when they should meditate on their own *strength*, and proceed to prove it. What acount the wealth of self-control and self-direction, handed down by generations of austere and clean-living ancestors, and put out to interest in the steady routine of Hindu piety, day after day and year after year? Besides, is it true that mankind always does

the cheap thing? Is the human will really like water, always to be carried to the lowest available level, by its own momentum? If this had been so, how should we explain that great transition, by which Hindus once upon a time, ceased to eat beef? They were accustomed to the food, and liked it. It was convenient to kill cattle and feed a household, in times of scarcity. But an idea of mercy and tenderness, added by the permanent economic interests of the civilisation, came in, and to-day, where is the Hindu who will eat beef? The Swadeshi movement is the cow-protecting movement, of the present age. There will yet come a time in India when the man who buys from a foreigner what his own countryman could by any means supply, will be regarded as on a level with the killer of cows to-day. For assuredly, the two offences are morally identical. * * * * *

Again, if it were true that man always took the easiest course, what society could ever hope to rise out of savagery? All our higher instincts, like cleanliness, refinement, love of learning, have been built up of refusals to go to the easy way, to take the cheaper of two results. Rather, is it true to say, that man is man in virtue of his inherent power to curb his grosser appetite and will, in favour of some finer and more remote purpose. Man is man in proportion only as he does *not* live the blind instructive life of his first impulse, his immediate convenience of individual self-interest, but a higher life of struggle against these primitive desires and their supression by others which are subtler, less self-regarding, and further reaching, It is precisely in a matter like the keeping of the Swadeshi vow that the Indion people, especially, can find an opportunity to show their true mettle. Their civilisation looks meagre enough and poor enough, beside the luxury and complexity of that of the West. But if it, with all its bareness, should prove to contain unsuspected moral potentialities, if it should hide a power, unknown to others, of choosing right at any cost, then which will force the acknowledgment of its superiority: the magnificence of Europe, or the poverty of the mother-land?

If we are told that no people will voluntarily buy in a dear market when they might buy in a cheap, we answer: *this may be true of Western peoples, educated in a system of co-operation for self-interest and at the same time it may be untrue of the Indian nation educated in a system of co-operation for self-sacrifice.*

I have spoken of this as a struggle on behalf of *Dharma.* But is this true? Is the Swadeshi movement actually an integral part of the National Righteousness? The Mother-Church at least,

has spoken with no uncertain voice. Like a trumpet-call has gone forth the Renewal of Vows at the Kalighat, in Calcutta. Throughout the whole country has been heard the fiat issued at Puri. Hence-forth it will be held sacrilege to offer foreign wares in worship. Here and there we learn of personal sacrifice, such as that of the poor *purohits* in the Eastern districts, who volunteered to offer only *gumtchas*, or coarse towels, during the recent *Puja*, in cases where country-cloth could not be had in the ordinary quantity, though to do so meant a year of poverty for them. But there is human proof forthcoming, also. In the commercial quarter of Calcutta, as soon as the Boycott began, it was found that the cry of "Pick-pocket!"—hitherto, alas, of hourly occurrence on the pavements of the Burra Bazar!—was no longer heard. It had actually become unfashionable for small boys to be constantly subjected to the harassing attentions of the police, and the jail as a school for our children was falling out of use! On investigation the merchants concluded that the dexterous fingers of the little folk were now busily employed in rolling the leaf-cigarettes, or country *biras*, that had superseded the English.

During the National Celebration of the 16th of October, a Bengali Mahommedan was heard addressing a crowd of his fellows. "Brothers," he was saying, "a little while ago, we could not earn four annas a day. You know that a man had to steal for his opium, and how many of us spent eight months of every year in prison, while our women ate outside their homes! But now, how everything is changed! Ten annas a day, with comfort and decency. No more stealing, no more prison, and our women cook for us and for themselves!" Of Calcutta it may be said that in all directions small industries have sprung up like flowers amongst us. Here are whole households engaged in making matches. Somewhere else, it is ink, tooth-powder, soap, note-paper, or what not. There, again, is a scheme for pottery, or glass, on a more ambitious scale. And this, without mentioning the very staple of the country, its cotton weaving. Where before were only despair and starvation, we see to-day glad faces, and feel an atmosphere of hope.

Again, where people are habitually below the line of proper feeding, the first sign of a wave of prosperity must be the appearance of more food-shops. And in the Indian parts of Calcutta, these greet the eye on all sides, with a more varied assortment of better food-stuffs than of old. Hope has come to the people. A chance of self-help has dawned upon them. And we may lay a wager that when that season arrives, the plague returns will show how hopeless is the

siege laid against the citadel of a higher comfort. For the truest hygiene lies in being well nourished. The best medicine it sufficient food.

Now what does all this mean? Could there be anything more pathetic than the joy of a confessedly criminal class at the cessation of a need for crime? In Europe, we have to deal with men who will not work, and commit crime, it is said, for the love of it. But can this be said of our "little brothers" of the Indian lower classes? Surely, if thereby one could give an opportunity to such sweetness and honesty and childlike purity of heart, as have revealed themselves through the unconscious lips of the Mahomedan work man, if one could thereby protect them, and aid them in their struggle on and up, one might be glad oneself to commit a thousand crimes and steep one's own soul in the lake of fire for ever. Oh voice of the Indian People, voice of the down-trodden, voice of the ignorant and helpless, speak louder yet, that we, your own flesh, may hear your cry, and know your innocent gladness, and join our hands and hearts with yours, in a common suffering and a common love! If it be true that by an attitude of rigid self-control we can help to turn jail-birds into honest men, give to children, who are now forced into dishonesty by the poverty of their homes, an education in labour, and a sufficient provision for life, bring food to the starving, and hope to the despairing, and finally strengthen the people to withstand the attacks of disease, is there any question as to the *Swadeshi tapasya* being *Dharma*? Let none talk nonsense about other lands! On Indian men and women is laid the responsibility of caring for the *Indian* poor. And let there never be forgotten the curse of the *Gita* on the man who does another's duty instead of his own. "Better for a man his own duty, however badly done, than the duty of another, though that be easy. *The duty of another leads into great peril.*" Let Manchester go! Let London go! It is for the Indian People to do *their own duty*.

But let us turn to the rewards of *tapasya*, if successfully carried out. First we must understand that no work was ever wasted. Every vibration of struggle brings its own result. When enough force has gone out, victory is the return. Ultimately, there is no such thing as defeat. A clear will, frustrated, only becomes the clearer. Loss becomes then nothing but again delayed. Again, victory depends only on effort, never on talk. All India is watching to-day the struggle that is going on in Eastern Bengal. Scarcely a word appears in the papers, yet the knowledge is everywhere. The air is tense with expectation, with sympathy

with pride, in those grim heroic people and their silent struggle to the death, for their Swadeshi trade. Quietly, all India is assimilating their power. Are they not a farmer people engaged in a warfare which is none the less real for being fought with spiritual weapons? But let him who stands in the path of right, beware! Clearer and clearer grows the will uujnstly thwarted. Sterner and sterner become they who are taught to depend on their own strength and in all history there comes an hour when the merciless man trembles, and cries out himself on the mercy of God, to find it gone?

The first result of faithfulness to Swadeshi, is, then, the power to be more faithful still. Here we find the value of the our difficulties. It is only a fool or a coward who tamely submits to opposition, The manly man feels that nothing else so effective in forcing him to keep the fires of his own enthusiasm ablaze.

But the second result is much more tangible. The movement to-day is only in its initial stage. It cannot be allowed to end till it has stopped the whole of the commercial drain upon the country. Now if the impoverishment of India is a matter of the amount of an annual drain put out at compound interest, which it is, it follows that the amount saved by the Swadeshi movement, so long as the level gained is maintained, is turned into *prosperity at compound interest.* Every pice circulated in India represents a value periodically added, in an accumulating ratio, to the Indian soil. If the Swadeshi movement, then, can only be adhered to with firmness, we are sure to hear, from the politicians of the Congress of an ecomics of hope, instead of an economics of despair!

What, then, of the difficulties of the Swadeshi movement? Apart from political opposition, which is, as has been said, rather a spur than otherwise, it has several serious obstacles to overcome, Amongst these I do not count that slight ebbing of interest which comes sooner or later in some degree to all things human, when the first eagerness of the multitudes is overpast. On the whole, this movement is rooted so deep in the trained habits of our women and our priests, that the tidal ebb is an extraordinarily small factor in the sum of action. And the whole of this is to be taken up and eliminated later, when the advance of the sea upon the land shall wash away the very shores themselves. No, the serious difficulties of the Swadeshi movement lie in the two great fields of Production and Distribution. * * * The channels of distribution, and the small shops,—which are the *real* distributing centres in every city,—have been so long in the hands of the foreign trade, that they require to be re-captured now, for their own. *Above all, these small shops must be captured by*

the Swadeshi. For they take, to whole quarters, the place which the housewife's store-room plays to the family-mansion. The four-anna shop, or the four.pice shop, is the store-room of the poor. There the school-boy buys his ink, his stationery, and his pencils. There the housewife stops, on her road from the river, to purchase a gift or a utensil. It is here that our own soap, ink paper, matches, toys, and the rest must be made to assail the eye in all directions. A place in the shop-window is the best advertisement. And only when this state of affairs has been brought about, can the Swadeshi movement realy penetrate beyond the palace and the temple, into the remotest corners of villages and huts. * * *

The clear sight that shows us where to strike, and the strong love of our own people, the helpless, "the little children" of the Mother-land, that is to make every blow tell, these, and these only, are the conditions that we want. Having these, we cannot fail. And we shall not fail. For all the forces of the future are with us. The Swadeshi movement has come to stay, and to grow, and to drive back for ever in modern India, the tides of reaction and despair.